Tools to Support Teaching and Learning
Offered with the Adoption of Testing Instruments from Insight Assessment:

Focused Training Strategies to Improve Critical Thinking
The Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric (HCTSR)

Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts
The Power of Asking Good Questions
Critical Thinking Training Session Feedback
Strong Critical Thinking in Groups
Critical Thinking Reflective Log
“Evaluating the Credibility of Sources”
The Rubric for Evaluating Written Argumentation (REWA)

1) **Focused Training Strategies to Improve Critical Thinking** is a thinking exercise designed to assist instructors to strengthen the teaching and learning strategies that they use to improve critical thinking skills and habits of mind. This thoughtful self-evaluation tool is also a powerful self-help guide to assist professional development for those focused on training critical thinking. The instructor who repeats this thinking exercise periodically will gain insights into their own best teaching practices and continuously improve their effectiveness in training strength in critical thinking.

2) **Critical Thinking: What it is and Why It Counts** an essay written by Dr. Peter Facione, a leading authority in critical thinking. This essay is periodically updated to capture new findings and discussion points to help learners explore the domain of critical thinking in all aspects of life and work, The original appeared in 1992. Author and the publisher hold copyright, ISBN 13: 978-1-891557-07-1. Permission is granted for paper, electronic, or digital copies to be made in unlimited amounts for purposes of advancing education and improving critical thinking, provided that distribution of copies is free of charge and provided that material is properly cited when extracted in whole or in part. For permission to reprint or permissions for intended resale, contact James Morante at 650-697-5628 or jmorante@insightassessment.com.

3) **Strong Critical Thinking in Groups** is designed to support and augment the benefits of strong critical thinking educational offerings which contain group projects, discussions or presentations. This one page tool guides learners through an evaluative thinking exercise where they must rate the quality of the critical thinking demonstrated by the group effort. When used by a person who is observing a group process, this tool maximizes active learning by requiring the rater to explain the basis for his or her ratings of the group’s work at framing their problem, their analysis of the problem, and their formulation of solutions. When used after a group thinking exercise by participants in the group, the tool assists in reflection about the quality of the learning experience just completed.

4) **The Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric (HCTSR)** is a rating measure that can be used to assess the quality of critical thinking displayed in a verbal presentation or written text. One would use the HCTSR to rate a written document or presentation where the presenter is required to be explicit about their thinking process. It can be used in any educational program or assessment process. Its greatest value is obtained when used by learners to assess the quality of their own or another’s reasoning. The clearly described criteria assist the learner to internalize the characteristics of strong and weak critical thinking. If you plan to use this instrument to assess critical thinking for any high stakes purposes, you must remember that your ratings will only be as valid as the strength of your raters. You will...
need to train the raters well to assure that they are making accurate ratings (judgments) about the evidence of critical thinking that they are observing and evaluating. It would be important to select a task, presentation, or written product where the thinker has been asked to explain their thinking and not just to provide the conclusions they have reached in regard to a particular dilemma. The validity and reliability of all such rubrics (rating forms) is judged by the Kappa Statistic. Rating tools are generally considered weaker measures of critical thinking than the other validated standardized instruments.

5) **The Power of Asking Good Questions** is a teaching tool designed to assist instructors in engaging students' critical thinking. By asking questions like those listed in this table, instructors can raise the quality of classroom discussions from simple information sharing and opinion giving to the level of analysis, interpretation, inference, explanation, evaluation and self-reflection. This tool appears on page 8 of “Critical Thinking: What It is and Why It Counts” and in *THINK Critically*, Facione and Gittens, Pearson Education.

6) **Critical Thinking Training Session Feedback** is a tool intended to function as both a self evaluation tool for the learner and as an evaluation of the educational offering itself for its ability to engage the learner as intended. The exercise of completing the form asks the learner to reflect specifically on their thinking experience related to the learning opportunity. Responses for each of the individual items are informative, and as a collection they serve as a subjective report of the learner’s experience. This is not a direct measure of the objective quality of the learning outcome, and is **NOT intended as a measure of strength or weakness in the learner’s actual critical thinking ability**. Self-assessments (self-report measures) of thinking ability have been shown to be falsely positive.

7) **Critical Thinking Reflective Log** – This critical thinking tool is intended to give structure and focus to journaling assignments made by many teachers and professors to assist students to integrate their learning experiences. As written it is aimed at the undergraduate level learner or novice professional, but it is easily adapted for use in other populations. Use the Reflective Log to coach and guide meta-cognition, to develop students' self-monitoring and self-correction skills.

8) “**Evaluating the Credibility of Sources**” explains the considerations which are relevant to the evaluation of expertise. It is a teaching tool which enables instructors to guide students’ critical thinking about what to believe or not to believe when they encounter claims on the Internet, TV, of social media, or in the forms of advertising, rumors, hearsay, assertions by persons in power, celebrities, friends, etc. These pages are extracted from *THINK Critically*, Facione & Gittens, Pearson Education and offered here with the author’s permission not only as a teaching tool, but as an example of the quality and practical utility of that book.

9) **The Rubric for Evaluating Written Argumentation (REWA)** is designed to provide detailed feedback on how written material that is intended to argue persuasively on behalf of a given claim, opinion, or recommendation might be improved. This rubric addresses eight different aspects of sound and effective writing: Purpose and Focus, Depth of Thought, Thesis, Reasoning, Organization, Voice, Grammar and Vocabulary, and Mechanics of Presentation.